

The carving of jack-o'-lanterns originated from the tradition of carving the faces of lost souls into hollowed out pumpkins and turnips. A candle was placed inside the carvings making the faces glow. The Halloween lanterns were placed on doorsteps to ward off evil spirits.

October – the Dead and Dying

October is the time to think of the beloved dead. Visit the cemetery if possible to honor the graves of those departed. Alternatively, find a quiet place outside, close to the earth, and meditate for a few minutes upon those dear ones who have died: think over each loss experienced this past year whether from death or separation. Allow the tears to come and gently comfort yourself with warm memories of fond times. Learn to express sadness and grief! Remember it was the tears of Isis that started the annual life-giving Nile floods.



In Sicily, legend has it that the dead leave their tombs during these days, raiding the best pastry shops to bring children special treats such as these Dead Man's Cookies.

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Dead Man's Cookies (makes about 5 dozen)

These cookies are eaten in Italy on All Soul's Day, when they are shaped to look like fava beans, a symbol of the dead in ancient Rome. Recall the May ritual to the dead spirits, the Lemuria, where beans were used to propitiate the dead.



The world's fastest time to carve a face into a pumpkin is 54.72 seconds, by Stephen Clarke (USA), on October 23, 2001 (source: Guinness World Records)

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"The grappa [an Italian brandy] in this Venetian sweet gives the cookies a distinct and slightly bitter edge. The same cookies are made in Rome without pine nuts or grappa by reducing the almonds to a fine powder, adding a tiny bit more butter, and flavoring them with cinnamon."

- 1 ½ to 1 ¾ cups blanched almonds
- 1 ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ tablespoons pine nuts, coarsely chopped
- 1 tablespoon grappa
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 egg
- 1 egg yolk

Halloween Candy Crate



A colorful paperboard Halloween character holds a sweet bouquet of candy for the holiday. Filled with at least 14 pieces of assorted candy. Container will be one of - pumpkin, ghost, witch or Frankenstein. A great treat for grandkids or other distant relatives.

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- 1 egg white for glaze

In a food processor fitted with the steel blade or with a sharp knife, chop the almonds into fine grains, but not a powder. Move them to the bowl of an electric mixer or to a large mixing bowl and add the sugar, flour, pine nuts, grappa, lemon zest, butter, egg, and egg yolk. Mix on the lowest speed in the electric mixer or stir together by hand. The dough initially seems very dry, but does eventually smooth out and come together. If you are really having trouble, add egg white, a teaspoon at a time.

Butter and flour baking sheets or line them with parchment paper. Divide the dough into several pieces. On a lightly floured work surface roll each one into a long narrow log about ¾ inches wide. Cut into 1-inch segments, about the size of a fava bean. Roll each one slightly to smooth out the edges, and then press a small indentation in the center, so that the cookies really do resemble the fava beans. Set on the baking sheets. Whip the egg white until it is frothy and brush a little bit on each cookie.

Bake cookies at 300 degrees until pale gold in color.

20 to 25 minutes.

Cool on racks.